



New Jersey Department of Children and Families Policy Manual

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Volume:	VI	Adolescent Services	
Chapter:	B	Self Sufficiency	4-25-2011
Subchapter:	1	Transitional Planning	
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Purpose 4-25-2011

The purpose of this policy is to promote permanency and independence for adolescents by proactively and collaboratively planning for their self-sufficiency in order to support a successful transition to adulthood.

It is the practice of the Division of Child Protection and Permanency to create welcoming and inclusive environments for all youth. The CP&P practice of inclusion extends to service delivery. Therefore, heterosexual youth, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning and intersexed youth are provided with equal access to all available services, including placement, care, and treatment.

CP&P Area and Local Offices have designated Safe Space Liaisons to assist in identifying local community resources for LGBTQI youth, such as school-based peer support and welcoming congregations. They can also provide print resources to help guide decision-making for LGBTQI youth in care.

Authority 9-20-2010

- Federal Safe and Timely Interstate Placement of Foster Children Act of 2006, 42 U.S.C. 675
- John Chafee Foster Care Independence Act of 1999
- P.L. 110-351, the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (FCSIAA)
- N.J.S.A. 9:17B-2, Laws Unaffected by Act
- N.J.A.C. 10:122D-2.7, Self-sufficiency skills for adolescent children

- N.J.S.A. 30:4C-12, Making a child a ward of the court and placing him or her under the care and supervision of the Division, when applicable

Definition of Terms 12-3-2007

Adolescent Services - A global term used to describe a wide range of services provided to adolescents up to age 21. Primary areas of service provision include health, education, employment, and housing.

Family Engagement - See [CP&P-III-B-5-500](#).

Independent Living - The maintenance of an adolescent in a living arrangement that eventually allows the adolescent to function on his or her own when circumstances preclude the adolescent from returning to the person or persons with whom he or she resided at the time of referral or application for services. No appropriate relative or family friend is able or willing to assume care of the adolescent, or to legally adopt the adolescent, or the adolescent rejects each of these living arrangements. See [CP&P-VI-A-2-101](#), Independent Living.

The John Chafee Foster Care Independence Act - Section 477 of the Social Security Act (replacing the Title IV-E Independent Living Program), a Federal program which requires states to plan for the needs of youth in care and provides funding for services to assist youth so they may successfully transition from care.

Life Goals - Those future aims and objectives to which an adolescent aspires, attained through planning, work and education.

Lifelong Connections/Caring Adults - A network of adults, including siblings, who have been meaningful in the adolescent's life, who will function as adult advisors and a permanent support system to the adolescent while he or she transitions to independence. They will maintain contact and lifelong support with the adolescent after he or she leaves the child welfare system.

Life Skills - Basic skills needed to succeed in daily living, career planning, housing, and money management.

Mentoring Programs - Programs specifically designed to ensure that adolescents aging out of the New Jersey child welfare system have adequate support during the process.

Permanency - A safe, stable, caring, permanent relationship with at least one adult, but preferably a network of committed adults who assist the adolescent with the emotional, physical, legal and cultural elements that are important to adolescent.

Self-Sufficiency - The ability to provide for oneself without help or assistance, and the capability of maintaining oneself independently.

Self-Sufficiency Skills - The basic life skills necessary to make the transition from out-of-home placement to living in society as a productive adult.

Transitional Plan for Adolescents - The plan written with the adolescent which identifies the action steps needed to attain permanency and achieve self-sufficiency, tailored to meet the adolescent's individual needs, developed to guide him or her toward independence.

Wraparound Funds - Short term emergency funding, not to exceed four (4) months, may be available to adolescents in life skills training, aftercare, transitional living, or supportive housing program. These funds must specifically address a need or goal. These funds are flexible and can be used to pay security deposits, a limited number of months' rent, driving lessons, furniture, and other items and services that support an adolescent's transition to independence. See policy at Wraparound Services, below.

Programs Leading to Self-Sufficiency 9-20-2010

Program Type	Definition	Eligibility
Aftercare	A contracted agency that provides intensive case management and supportive services for adolescents aging out. Will continue to work with the adolescent at least six months after CP&P case is closed. Provides assistance with obtaining meaningful employment, safe housing, college/vocational tuition, access to Wraparound Funds.	Ages 18 to 21, who have an open CP&P case, or who had a CP&P case in the past. CP&P refers <u>all</u> adolescents age 18 to 21 in out-of-home placement who wish to have their cases closed.
Life Skills Training	A contracted agency that works with adolescents to develop necessary skills for their transition from placement to independence.	Adolescents 14 to 18 years of age, in a CP&P paid placement.
Transitional Living	A housing program that is time restricted, with a maximum duration of residence limited to 18 months. Provides a safe living arrangement, case management, life skills, counseling and other services.	Ages 16 to 21, being served by CP&P, or who were formerly CP&P involved, or are homeless.
Youth Supported Housing	A contracted agency that provides housing, case management, life skills, counseling, as well as other services. May have flexible residence time frames. Youth are encouraged to exit the program based on their own	Ages 18 to 21, foster youth who are aging out of care, and homeless youth.

	readiness, promoted through supportive services within a restricted housing environment.	
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Promoting Permanency and Self Sufficiency 4-12-2010

It is essential that all adolescents involved in the child welfare system attain permanency and independence.

The Division, caring adults, family members, and others involved in the youth's life proactively and collaboratively plan for a successful transition to adulthood, permanency, and independence. They guide the adolescent, and help him or her explore employment and higher education options.

- Permanency includes having family relationships with safe, caring and committed adults.
- Independence is attained by acquiring the skills and support system necessary to function and thrive as a productive adult member of society.

Four essential aspects of planning provide the foundation for a successful transition to adulthood:

- Assessment, Support System, and Transition Plan
- Life Skills Training
- Aftercare Services
- Termination of DCF Involvement

To better assist disabled youth leaving foster care, the Social Security Administration (SSA) established new rules effective January 13, 2010. **The SSA will now accept a Supplemental Security Income (SSI) application for a disabled youth in foster care up to 90 days before foster care payments are expected to end.** See policy at [CP&P-IX-F-1-250](#), Federal Benefits. Direct any questions regarding Federal Social Security benefits, including SSI, to the attention of the Local Office Title IV-E Liaison.

Assess Adolescent's Life Skills Proficiency 12-3-2007

When the adolescent is 14 years of age, the assigned Worker and adolescent collaborate to complete a comprehensive, formal assessment process to determine basic competencies in a number of skill areas.

Staff should utilize the New Jersey Competency Based Life Skill Assessment System. Two critical components of this system are:

LIFE SKILLS ASSESSMENT TOOL	WEB ADDRESS
Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment	http://lifskills.casey.org
National Resource Center for Youth Services	http://www.nrcys.ou.edu/training/certified/newjersey User name: nj Password: cblsa

The youth and the caregiver complete the Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment on-line at <http://lifskills.casey.org>. The Caseworker provides the youth and the caregiver with the Worker's e-mail address. The youth and the caregiver enter the Caseworker's e-mail address into the www.caseylifeskill.org website. This ensures that the results of the youth's assessment will be e-mailed to the Caseworker. Additional e-mail addresses may be entered, to enable the youth and/or the caregiver to receive a copy as well.

The Caseworker prints the results page/report and places it in the child's case record. The Caseworker then opens a pending case plan in New Jersey SPIRIT by going to the Case Goal tab, clicking the link to the Independent Living screen. At the Independent Living screen the Worker places a check in the box indicating the assessment is complete and enters the date.

The Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment is to be completed by youth who are in placement over the age of 14. Ask the youth to complete it within 60 days of the youth either turning 14 years of age, or entering placement, whichever is later. The Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment is done annually thereafter until such time as the youth is no longer in out-of-home placement or ages out of the child welfare system.

The Worker uses the NRCYS website, "Strengths/Needs Assessment Form," and the "Strengths/Needs Assessment Guideline Questions," as a guide to obtain a baseline of the adolescent's interests in athletics, education, and employment, as well as relationships with family/friends and ability to complete life skills.

The Caseworker ensures that:

- The Ansell Casey Life Skills assessment has been completed within the past 12 months.
- The Transitional Plan for Adolescents (CP&P Form [5-43](#)) has been completed within the past 6 months in preparation for the placement review held during the school year before entering high school.
- Assistance is provided to an adolescent interested in a vocational program, to enroll during eighth grade.

- If the adolescent is looking toward college, he or she enrolls in college preparatory courses in high school. Seek help from the child's Guidance Counselor.

Life skills development, as documented in the Transition Plan for Adolescents, is formulated upon the results of the life skills assessment. Subsequent instruction in identified areas of need may be provided by caring adults in the adolescent's life, an independent living skills program, or a transitional living program.

Identifying Lifelong Connections/Caring Adults 12-3-2007

The Worker, in collaboration with the adolescent, identifies at least one significant adult in the adolescent's life. This may be a relative, a teacher or coach, a neighbor, clergy or a member of the child's church, who will function as an adult advisor to the adolescent, to assist in the development of the transitional plan, and who will continue to provide guidance to the adolescent after involvement with CP&P ends. The caring adult(s) may be the resource parent.

Develop a Transitional Plan for Adolescents. 9-20-2010

The Transition Plan for Adolescents must be directed by the youth, with the youth taking the lead in planning. The Caseworker uses the result of the Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment to guide the creation of the Transition Plan with the adolescent. The adolescent, Worker, caring adults, family members and others who are interested in the adolescent's future gather together to develop a strength-based plan using CP&P Form [5-43](#), Transitional Plan for Adolescents.

Complete or update the Transition Plan for Adolescents at the Placement Review Conference, held every six months, or when a goal has been achieved or a modification is necessary. Complete a Transition Plan within 90 days prior to closing the case. See [CP&P-III-B-5-500](#), Family Engagement.

The plan explains the responsibilities of each person involved in the development of the plan, to assist the adolescent in attaining the identified skill(s).

Use CP&P Form [22-25](#), the New Jersey CP&P SDM™ Child Strengths and Needs Assessment, accessible through the NJ SPIRIT application.

Obtain the child's academic records from his or her current school, to assist those gathered to develop a viable plan.

Provide the adolescent at age 18 with information regarding the importance of designating another individual to make health care treatment decisions on his or her behalf, should he or she become unable to participate in such decision making (due to a medical emergency, motor vehicle accident, etc.). The youth may choose a Health Care Representative upon turning 18 years of age. (See Section 475(8)(B)(iii) of the Social Security Act.)

Objectives of the Transitional Plan for Adolescents

9-20-2010

This written plan addresses, at a minimum, the adolescent's:

- Life goals - which the adolescent selects for him or herself;
- Career goals - selected by the adolescent and chosen through exploration of information and subsequent referral to appropriate resources; the Worker and caregiver help the adolescent identify the skills necessary to achieve his or her career goals;
- Educational goals - (give the adolescent information about the New Jersey Foster Care Scholars Program which can provide financial support for post-secondary educational and vocational programs):
 - Upon request, the Worker refers the adolescent to resources for post-secondary educational opportunities;
- Permanency goals - (the adolescent will attain permanency either through adoption, KLG, reunification with a safe family member, or a lifelong connection with an identified adult);
- Health Care - help the adolescent, age 18 or older, identify a relative or caring adult who can make health care treatment decisions on his or her behalf, in case of emergency. See [CP&P-V-A-7-100](#), Health Care Considerations for Adolescents. Give the adolescent information regarding the Medicaid Extension for Young Adults (MEYA);
- Acquisition of Basic Life Skills - the adults and the adolescent review the assessment results to identify critical areas that should be addressed with formal and/or informal education and training; and
- Resource Identification - the adults identify and review services and programs available through DCF, other State agencies, and additional public and private organizations, to aid the adolescent in achieving his or her stated goals.

Monitor the Plan 7-20-2009

- Monitor the implementation of the transitional plan during MVR visits; modify the plan as appropriate.
- Re-evaluate the plan every six months, at a minimum.
- Complete the life skills assessment with the adolescent annually.

- Prior to closing the case, engage the adolescent, caring adult(s), family members and individuals from other agencies or organizations involved with the adolescent to discuss the following items:
 - Confirmation that appropriate service referrals have been completed;
 - Outline supports to be provided by caring adults after involvement with CP&P ends;
 - Provide information pertaining to all supportive Community-Based Services that can assist in the adolescent's continued transition towards independence and self-sufficiency;
 - Within 90 days prior to closing the case, complete and update CP&P Form [5-43](#), Transitional Plan for Adolescents, as directed by the youth.

Note: See [CP&P-III-A-1-500](#)., Case Closing Practice for Adolescent 18 to 21.

Community-Based Services 12-3-2007

The Worker refers the adolescent to relevant community programs or resources which can assist the youth while they are in care and after they transition from care. Services include, but are not limited to:

- Educational assistance
- Health insurance
- Employment
- New Jersey Youth Corp
- Addiction services
- Transitions for Youth Website, which lists resources for adolescents and young people: <http://www.njyrs.org/> To access and print out the CP&P Adolescent Resource Guide go to: <http://nj.gov/dcf/adolescent/OASresourceguide.pdf>.

Relevant NJS Windows and Forms 12-3-2007

- CP&P Form [5-16](#), Child's Education Record
- CP&P Form [5-43](#), Transitional Plan for Adolescents
- CP&P Form [5-66](#), Adolescent Case Closing Agreement
- CP&P Form [5-67](#), Adolescent Case Closing Checklist

- CP&P Form [11-10](#), Health Passport and Placement Assessment
- CP&P Form [22-25](#), the New Jersey CP&P SDM™ Child Strengths and Needs Assessment (completed through the NJ SPIRIT application, at the Investigations Window)
- CP&P Form [26-81](#), Family Summary/Case Plan
- CP&P Form [26-83](#), Visitation Plan
- CP&P Form [26-87](#), Desired Family Outcomes and Specific Activities

Related Policy 9-20-2010

- [CP&P-VII-A-1-300](#), New Jersey Foster Care Scholars Program (NJFC Scholars Program)
- [CP&P-III-B-5-500](#), Family Engagement
- [CP&P-III-A-1-500](#), Services to Adolescents Age 18 to 21
- [CP&P-VI-A-2-101](#), Independent Living Placement
- [CP&P-V-A-3-500](#), Medicaid Extension for Young Adults (MEYA), Also Known as Chafee Medicaid
- [CP&P-V-A-7-100](#), Health Care Considerations for Adolescents

JOHN CHAFEE FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM 6-30-2005

Federal funding for State programs -- In the fall of 1999, the John Chafee Foster Care Independence Act, Section 477 of the Federal Social Security Act, was passed, replacing the Title IV-E Independent Living Program (ILP). The John Chafee Foster Care Independence Act makes funding available to states to identify adolescents who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age, and to design programs with a continuum of services to assist with transition to self-sufficiency. Chafee program services assist adolescents aging out of the child welfare system with personal and emotional support through mentoring and involving other dedicated adults in the case plan:

- To enhance daily living skills;
- With training in budget and financial management skills;
- To obtain a high school diploma;
- To enroll in vocational training;

- To prepare to enter post-secondary educational institutions, and pursue related scholarships;
- To receive training and related services necessary to obtain employment;
- To obtain and retain a job;
- To explore a career;
- With substance abuse prevention;
- With health-related preventative activities (e.g., smoking avoidance, pregnancy prevention); and
- To register for the Selective Service.

The John Chafee Foster Care Independence Act also provides for the establishment of programs for adolescents between 18 and 21 years of age, who were formerly in foster care, to provide:

- Financial;
- Housing;
- Counseling;
- Employment;
- Education; and
- Other support services.

These programs assist the adolescent's own efforts toward achieving the goal of self-sufficiency.

Note: Adolescents under CP&P supervision, who are adjudicated delinquent and detained in a detention facility, are not eligible for services under the Chafee Program.

For information, support and assistance in accessing Chafee programs and services, contact the CP&P Area Office Chafee Liaison assigned to the Local Office where the adolescent is under CP&P supervision. Details about Chafee programs follow.

INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS PROGRAMS (UNDER CHAFEE) 6-30-2005

Adolescents, age 14 through 21 years old, in a CP&P out-of-home placement, are eligible to receive life skills training provided by independent living programs. Programs funded through the Chafee Act or the Homeless Youth Program, provide independent

living skills training. Youth under the age of 16 are not eligible for the "goal" of Independent Living in New Jersey.

Participation in life skills training facilitates transition to independence, and enables the adolescent to obtain maximum benefit from aftercare services and other Chafee related programs.

Independent living skills programs focus on life skills training to assist the adolescent with:

- Employment;
- Money management;
- Accessing community resources;
- Communication;
- Decision making and problem solving;
- Housing, and
- Interpersonal relationships.

Use CP&P [Form 5-42, On the Road to Independence](#), an assessment guide and workbook, to identify the key areas in which life skills training is needed to achieve self-sufficiency.

AFTERCARE PROGRAMS (UNDER CHAFEE) 6-30-2005

Community agencies administer aftercare -- The Division contracts with community agencies to administer aftercare programs to assist adolescents in the implementation of the transitional plan to self-sufficiency.

CP&P assesses adolescents for aftercare services who are in out-of-home placement through CP&P, or who were in an out-of-home placement at age 16 or older, and whose plan is termination of services when the age of majority is reached (age 18). Note: Some aftercare programs may not be available for adolescents who did not complete a life skills curriculum.

Act six months in advance -- The Worker links an adolescent eligible for aftercare services to an aftercare program six months prior to the Division closing the case. The Worker and aftercare program staff meet with the adolescent, and other significant adults in the adolescent's life, to develop a transitional plan. The program continues to provide related services for up to six months after the Division terminates supervision. Extensions for continued aftercare services are determined on a case-by-case basis.

Advise adolescents of their eligibility for the Medicaid Extension Program for Young Adults (MEYA). See [CP&P-V-A-3-500](#).

The Worker and adolescent identify a "caring adult" who will assist the adolescent through the aftercare process in achieving the transition to self-sufficiency. The caring adult provides emotional support, encouragement and a continued presence in the adolescent's life.

The aftercare program provides case management services to assist the adolescent:

- Link to school-based programs;
- Apply for college or trade/vocational school;
- Apply for educational scholarships (see [CP&P-VII-A-1-300](#));
- Locate permanent or transitional housing;
- Obtain employment that can support the adolescent in the community and provide sufficient financial means for him or her to live independently;
- Develop a support network; and
- Identify and access other community services to assist in the transition to independence.

Adolescents who were terminated from CP&P supervision may apply for aftercare services until the age of 21.

The "caring adult" has a continued presence in the adolescent's life by providing emotional support, encouragement and guidance after the case is closed.

WRAPAROUND SERVICES 8-9-2010

To assist an adolescent in the transition to self-sufficiency, wraparound funds are made available to:

- Adolescents 16 years of age or older, working with an independent living skills program,
- Adolescents 18 years of age or older, working with an aftercare agency, and
- Adolescents under 21 years of age, who graduated from an aftercare program, who re-apply for services.

Wraparound funds are administered by aftercare programs and can be used to purchase or pay for one-time items, or time-limited services (no longer than four months in duration), such as but not limited to:

- Educational application fees;
- Job placement fees;
- Security deposits;
- Rent;
- Driving lessons;
- Mentoring services;
- Linen;
- Clothing;
- Parenting skills classes;
- Tutoring; and
- To purchase furniture.

TRANSITIONAL LIVING PROGRAMS (UNDER CHAFEE) 6-30-2005

Transitional living programs provide housing and related support services to adolescents, between the ages of 18 and 21 years, who were in out-of-home placement on their 18th birthday. The housing programs are supervised.

Adolescents eligible for a transitional living program must enter the program voluntarily and be able to live independently with minimal adult supervision. Transitional living programs are time limited and provide:

- Housing, for a period of 12 to 18 months;
- Case management services;
- Life skills; and
- Employment services.

Once the adolescent enters a transitional living program, the CP&P Worker supervises the adolescent for a minimum of 90 days, at which time a determination is made whether further CP&P supervision is warranted.

The "caring adult" continues to provide emotional support and assist the adolescent in the transition to adulthood and independence. The adult maintains contact with the transitional living program in order to update the program of their involvement and any achievements or concerns related to the adolescent.

THE NEW JERSEY HOMELESS YOUTH ACT (HYA) 6-30-2005

Prevention measures under HYA -- The New Jersey Homeless Youth Act (HYA) was enacted in 1999. The Act declares that homeless adolescents are "a largely invisible population," many of whom have no families. Homeless adolescents are urgently in need of services to prevent them from being exploited, turning to delinquency, prostitution, or drug dependence, or being permanently homeless.

Definition, homeless adolescent -- The HYA defines a homeless adolescent as, "a person 21 years of age or younger who is without shelter, where appropriate care and supervision are available." HYA allows a homeless adolescent, 21 years of age and younger, to receive services regardless of whether he or she is under the supervision of CP&P or a County Crisis Intervention Unit (CCIU). Funding through HYA has enabled the Division to contract with local community agencies to provide the following three types of programs to service homeless adolescents:

- Street Outreach Program - a mobile outreach program which identifies homeless adolescents and provides direct service, and/or locates and contacts an appropriate agency to provide services, which may include, but are not limited to:
 - Assistance in finding temporary or short-term shelter,
 - Assistance in obtaining food,
 - A clothing allowance,
 - Individual and group counseling in the area of violence prevention,
 - Information and referral services regarding organizations and agencies that provide support services to homeless adolescents, and
 - Assistance in obtaining medical care.
- Basic Center Shelter - a basic shelter program which provides homeless adolescents, 21 years of age and younger, with 24-hour, seven-day a week, walk-in access to emergency, short-term residential care. Basic center shelter staff:

- Attempt to notify the adolescent's parent(s), legal guardian or legal custodian within 24 hours, when the adolescent is 18 years of age or younger, of the adolescent's admission, unless there is a compelling reason not to do so. Compelling reasons include, but are not limited to, circumstances in which adolescent is, or has been, a victim of child abuse or neglect;
- Report to the State Central Registry an allegation of suspected child abuse or neglect of a homeless adolescent, who is 17 years of age or younger, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 9:6-8.21, et seq. The homeless adolescent may remain in a basic center shelter for up to 30 days pending the Division's disposition of a child abuse/neglect investigation;
- Notify the State Central Registry within 24 hours to determine whether the Division has legal care or custody of an adolescent, 18 years of age or younger, who is admitted to the shelter. If the adolescent is under the legal care or custody of the Division, the basic center shelter staff and the Worker work together to determine the service plan for the adolescent, who may remain in the basic center shelter for up to 30 calendar days;
- Assist the adolescent in notifying the local police when he or she is the victim of a crime, and provide support to the adolescent as needed;
- Notify the Juvenile Family Crisis Unit in the county of residence of the homeless adolescent within 24 hours, when the adolescent is 18 years of age or younger, is not under the supervision of the Division and there is no suspicion of abuse or neglect. The adolescent may remain in the shelter for up to 10 calendar days without the consent of the adolescent's parent(s), legal guardian or legal custodian while the crisis unit and shelter staff attempt reunification services. If reunification with the parent(s), legal guardian or legal custodian is not in the adolescent's best interests or is not possible, the crisis unit and shelter staff determine what services shall be provided to the adolescent. Services may include crisis intervention services and continued temporary placement in the shelter for up to an additional 30 calendar days; and
- Notify the CP&P Interstate Services Unit Compact Administrator within 24 hours when an adolescent, 18 years of age or younger who is from another state, is admitted to the basic center shelter.

Services provided to adolescents at the basic center shelter may include, but are not limited to:

- Family reunification services,
 - Individual, family, and/or group counseling,
 - Food,
 - A clothing allowance,
 - Medical care,
 - Educational services,
 - Recreational activities, and
 - Advocacy and referral services.
- Transitional Living Programs – a program which provides residential care and treatment services to homeless adolescents between the ages of 16 and 21 years of age, who are able to function with minimal adult supervision. Transitional living programs maintain the adolescent in a living situation while providing services directly, or through referral to, other agencies. These services may include:
 - Educational assessment and linkage to an educational program,
 - Career planning and employment training,
 - Life skills training,
 - Job placement,
 - Budgeting and money management,
 - Assistance in securing affordable housing to meet the adolescent's needs, and
 - Assistance in accessing other community services

**Chafee Services/Supports and Education and Training Vouchers (ETV)
8-17-2009**

The Chafee Independence Program may also provide independent living services and other supports, as well as Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) to youth who leave foster care for kinship legal guardianship or adoption after their 16th birthday.